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# JAPAN'S QUEST FOR LIFE

*A Reading Course*

By HENRY ST. GEORGE TUCKER

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## WHY THIS COURSE IS PUBLISHED

THE PURPOSE of this course is to provide for individuals who desire it, guidance in their thinking and reading on the life of modern Japan and the relation of the Christian movement to the solution of the many problems arising from the impact of western civilization upon the Island Empire. The reviews of the six books recommended for reading are interspersed in Bishop Tucker's essay.

## THE AUTHOR

HENRY ST. GEORGE TUCKER, the present Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, was a missionary in Japan for twenty-four years—from 1899 to 1923. He was president of St. Paul's University, Tokyo, from 1903 to 1912, and Bishop of Kyoto, from 1912 until his retirement in 1923. He is the author of *Missionary Problems and Policies in Japan*, *Reconciliation Through Christ*, and *Providence and the Atonement*. (Paddock Lectures for 1934.)

# JAPAN'S QUEST FOR LIFE

## A Reading Course on Japan

By THE RT. REV. H. ST. G. TUCKER

“**I**t is important to realize that the Christianization of Japan is no holiday task; indeed it is certain to be a long and severe campaign.” With these words, Dr. Harada, sometime President of Doshisha University, concludes his most interesting book *The Faith of Japan*. Dr. Harada was, however, no pessimist with regard to the future of Christian missionary work. “Gigantic as are the internal forces arrayed against Christianity, the Christian cohorts are daily growing in numbers and efficiency, and there are multitudes of Nicodemuses needing only a crisis to bring them out into the open.” Moreover he recognizes that however difficult the task, its completion is well worth all the effort that will be involved. “I make bold to say that her victory or defeat in Japan will largely determine the future of Christianity in the whole Far East.”

These quotations will indicate some of the questions for which an answer should be sought in following Japan's quest for life. The commanding position which Japan has won for herself in the Orient confirms Dr. Harada's assertion that her Christianization will be an influential factor in that of the whole Far East. To those who question the justification, or at least the need, of carrying Christianity to countries which have already their own

SUZUKI LOOKS AT  
JAPAN  
*By*  
WILLIS C. LAMOTT

religions, a careful reading of chapter four entitled—Avenues of Faith in *Suzuki Looks at Japan* by Willis C. Lamott is recommended.

Not only chapter four but this whole book merits attention. Mr. Lamott, a veteran Christian missionary, presents a sympathetic interpretation of Japanese problems through the eyes of a Japanese Christian, Suzuki (a name as common to Japan as Smith is in America). Representative of the professional and commercial classes who make up the larger part of the Anglican and Protestant Christian bodies, Suzuki has world-wide interests, but his chief concern is with the problems of his own people. As he looks around him he beholds his nation tremendously affected and changed by its contact with the western world; externally, the dull neon lights bespeak the presence of the café and dance hall, the *modan boi* and *modan garu* (modern boy and modern girl), the cheap bookstalls with their American literature of the gutter type, the amorous movies; inwardly, the spread of the spirit of materialism and militarism, the weakening of the hold of the old religions and the spread of atheism and agnosticism in the many schools and colleges of the Government system.

What answer has the Christian Church to give to these problems? And to the difficulties raised by the increase of the modern factory system, the growth of industrial cities, the slum with its poverty, wretchedness and crime, the increase in the number of labor disputes, child labor?

REALISM IN ROMANTIC  
JAPAN  
*By*  
MIRIAM BEARD

This Japan with its colorful romantic atmosphere of another civilization mingling with the oft crude and frequently harsh reality of

an embryonic industrialism is made very real to those who have never visited its shores in *Realism in Romantic Japan* by Miriam Beard. To those who know Japan, Miss Beard recalls many delightful experiences which she illuminates with a wealth of fresh knowledge.

A series of colorful word-pictures carries the narrative from steamer wharf, railway station, and hotel, through the streets, past the alluring sights of an interesting and unfamiliar land to the more intimate atmosphere of Japanese living and thinking. And as we go, some of the reasons for the West's misconception of Japan are sympathetically clarified.

The chapter titles indicate the changes which are taking place in Japanese life, described from the standpoint of an observer of the facts rather than that of a student of the complicated causes of the change. The book is a good introduction to a deeper study as it arouses the same kind of personal interest as would a visit to the land.

The chapter on The Social Web pictures the social system and the home life. The Geisha and Modern Morals describes a problem in some respects peculiar to Japan. To those who are fearful that in this commercial age Japan is forgetting her art, Miss Beard says:

"The truth is, never in all her history was appreciation

of the arts and letters more generally diffused than it is in Japan at the present time." Much enlightening information concerning artists, schools of art, music, cinema, stage, is contained in the chapter, Arts and the Public.

Writers and their work, ancient and modern, are introduced in a very illuminating discourse on Japanese literature; and concerning changes in the Japanese language we are told that it "is being enriched to meet the requirements of a more complicated period." So great is the demand for present-day books and magazines that bookshops are seen everywhere; "alluring resorts, as attractive to the book-lover as the stalls along the Seine."

We are led from the bookshops, which especially abound near the universities, to survey the student, that "romantic figure" who, because of tradition, must assume poverty and fortitude even when it is not real, for the Orient associated these qualities with a gentleman and a scholar. The outlook for students, boys and girls, is not a happy one in many cases. They clamor for higher education which, because of lack of funds the Government cannot supply; and many of those who have attained it have found nothing to do. The life of the student, the problems he faces because of lack of wholesome diversion, and consequent temptations, are graphically brought to the mind of the reader.

Through the door Miss Beard opens, one enters into the human side of the life of the Japanese people—an appreciation of the old cultures, of bygone attainments and

values, and a realization of the difficulties of the transition time as they drift away from old customs and landmarks to a future which for the individual and the nation is still but dimly outlined.

JAPAN: SOME PHASES OF  
HER PROBLEMS AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
*By INAZO NITOBE*

For a deeper understanding of Japan, her people and her place in the modern world, it would be difficult to find a better guide than

Dr. Inazo Nitobe. Born into a feudal and Buddhist environment in the period when Japan was reëntering international life, he saw the vast changes introduced during the Meiji era and during the reigns of the succeeding emperors. For seven years a member of the International Secretariat of the League of Nations at Geneva, he enjoyed unusual opportunities for understanding Japan's relations to other nations. For most of his life he was a foremost figure in the literary life of Japan and one of its outstanding Christian citizens. Thus, he inevitably became one of Japan's most effective interpreters to people of other lands. The fruits of intimate knowledge of his own country and of wide acquaintance with the modern world are set forth in his *Japan: Some Phases of Her Problems and Development*. A vast amount of information is compressed into its 350 pages.

Of special interest are Dr. Nitobe's interpretation of Japan's geographical situation in relation to the Asiatic continent; his outline of Japan's history and his illuminat-

ing account of the emergence of the new Japan, with its remarkable educational system and its active thought life.

He judges the influence of Christianity in Japan by its fruits. Its service to education he declares to be incalculable. The idea of personality inherent in Christianity he finds to be the only true basis for human liberty and equality. He emphasizes the fact that social justice is an impossibility without a recognition of the spiritual relation of man to man. So far as Japan is concerned, he repudiates the idea that Christianity is an alien faith and makes the fully justified assertion that Christianity is more closely related to Japanese thought and life of today than it was to Occidental thought when first introduced into Europe.

"The way by which our nation is approaching Christianity," he says, "is different from the way taken by western nations. They had a straighter road to traverse, except in Rome. We wind along the streams and mountain paths, faintly marked by crosses, and still pointing in the right direction. Before very long Christian faith, enriched by the intellectual treasures of centuries and deepened by Oriental mysticisms, will be a part of the forces which will drive the nation towards its destiny."

If we can assume the importance of our missionary objective, a Christian Japan, the next question will be as to its practicability. It is seventy-five years since the first missionaries of the Church landed in Nagasaki. Do the results of these three-quarters of a century of work justify the expectation that Japan will become a Christian nation? To some the progress of the Church's work there seems

disappointingly slow. Many western visitors to the Orient bring back the discouraging report that missionaries are wasting their time and our money. The Laymen's Inquiry Report, while it is emphatic in its recommendation that missionary work in the Orient should be continued, is severely critical of present methods.

The only way to find a satisfactory answer to such questions is to study the results actually attained through missionary activities. Further, the significance of these results can be appreciated only when we have a clear understanding of the problems involved in introducing Christianity into such a country as Japan. As Dr. Harada says, the evangelization of Japan is no holiday task. The difficulties which we encounter are of two kinds, first those that must be overcome in order to get a hearing for the Gospel message, and secondly those that are involved in winning an understanding acceptance of it from a people whose characteristics have been molded by their own past. In addition to these difficulties we have to reckon with widespread religious indifference which is the natural result of the impact of western civilization upon an Oriental culture.

The reading of the books referred to above, *Suzuki Looks at Japan*, *Realism in Romantic Japan*, and *Japan: Some Phases of Her Problems and Development* will do much to clarify these problems. Japan, however, represents a civilization and a culture so different from that of the West that the student must beware lest he be like the traditional frogs which set forth from Osaka and Kyoto many,

many years ago, each to see the other's city. The two cities are forty miles apart, and the tale tells how each frog set out from its own home to explore the wonders of the other city. They arrived at a point midway between Kyoto and Osaka, and then, each standing erect on his hind legs, proceeded to get a first sight of the strange town ahead. Alas, since frogs have their eyes at the back of their heads, in each case the vision was backward turned and neither frog saw aught but the city from which he had started. Is it any wonder that they turned sadly back, convinced that Kyoto was but the replica of Osaka and Osaka of Kyoto?

AN OUTLINE HISTORY  
OF JAPAN  
By  
HERBERT H. GOWEN

It is a common habit of Westerners, at least in looking out upon other countries, more or less persistently to use the eyes in the back of

their heads. Thus, despite the fact that our own national history has been moving steadily in the direction of the Orient, our conception of that history has remained quite provincial. Aware of this situation, the Rev. Herbert H. Gowen, distinguished Orientalist and Churchman, has tried to make it easy for Americans to see Japan as the Japanese see it in his *An Outline History of Japan*. Out of his lifelong study of the Orient, Dr. Gowen has written a readable narrative of Japanese history from its very beginnings in the mythical and legendary days down through the beginnings of the reign of the present

Emperor Hirohito. The story itself is admirably supplemented by useful tables and appendices such as chronological tables of the Emperors of Japan, and of the Shoguns. There is also a selected list of books which are generally accessible to the readers who would pursue various aspects of the subject further. Against this great backdrop of history can be placed in its proper proportions and relationships the origins and development of Christianity.

Up to the present the Church has engaged in overcoming the first class of obstacles and in preparing to meet the second. Expressed in more concrete terms this means that the Church has been trying to break down prejudice, to remove suspicion and hostility, and to bring about an understanding of the beneficent purpose of Christianity. At the same time the Church has labored to build up a Japanese Church to serve as the organ through which the Christian Gospel can be presented to a nation prepared to give it a hearing.

We should, therefore, first of all seek to ascertain the progress that has been made in attaining this twofold objective. Our work began in a Japan in which Christianity had been a proscribed religion for over two hundred years. Even after the Government as a result of Commodore Perry's expedition had been compelled to permit missionaries to reside in certain treaty-ports, the laws forbidding the Christian religion still remained in force for many years. These laws correspond to the general attitude of the people. Their opposition to

Christianity was due not so much to religious prejudice as to a feeling that it was detrimental to the national welfare. Even as late as 1882 Mr. Fukugawa, one of the most progressive and able men of that period, wrote:

"The national religion of Japan is Buddhist. The higher classes of Japan care nothing about any religion. Nevertheless at this juncture this peculiar merit of the Japanese is a grave detriment to the country. That Christianity is a danger to our national power is evident. Unless Buddhism is assisted by the influence of the upper classes nothing can obstruct the intrusion of Christianity. We do not believe in Buddhism nor do we respect the priest. Our concern is for the national power, in the conservation of which that religion must be utilized." The attitude of the general run of people is illustrated by a remark made by a woman just after her confirmation, "Until a year or so ago I shivered with disgust whenever I passed a Christian Church."

The first task of the Christian missionaries was to dispel this suspicion by their life and teaching and good works. It is fair to say that this has been thoroughly accomplished. Not only so, but those who like Mr. Fukugawa formerly dreaded this religion as a menace to the national welfare have come to recognize the value of its practical aims and give their support to its program of moral and social reform. This does not mean, of course, that Japan as a nation is ready to accept Christianity, but it does indicate that the old feeling of suspicion and hostility has been almost completely obliterated. Further, the influence of

Christianity is evidenced by the widespread acceptance of its moral and social principles. Along with this there has come an understanding of some, at least, of the fundamental Christian religious beliefs. The agents of the Bible societies sell each year approximately a million copies of portions of the Scriptures. That these are read is shown by the numerous Biblical references that one finds in secular Japanese literature. One of the fullest and most appreciative lives of Christ that has been published in Japan was written by a non-Christian. These illustrations of both negative and positive changes of attitude towards Christianity might be multiplied, but they will serve to show that one part of our preliminary objective has been attained: the conditions that are prerequisite to the presentation of the Christian Gospel to the Japanese have been fulfilled.

What progress has been made in the development of a Japanese Church? The answer to this question is the most important consideration in a study of missionary work in Japan. Success in producing conditions favorable to the preaching of the Gospel would be useless without an agency through which it can be mediated to the masses of the people. Japan as a nation must be evangelized by Japanese. The reasons for this are obvious. Some will doubtless ask whether it is not sufficient to teach a people like the Japanese the Christian way of living without trying to substitute a new religion for their old faith. Christ, however, is not only the Way but also the Truth and the Life. We know from our own experience that

without Him and His salvation the Christian way of living is impossible.

The old faiths prove inadequate to meet the new conditions. They tend to disintegrate under the impact of the influences which have been pouring into Japan from the West. Already a large proportion of modern educated Japanese have no definite religious beliefs. This falling away from the old religions is not due to the proselyting activities of the Christian missionary, but to the same causes which have produced so much religious doubt and indifference in our western world. Paradoxical as it may seem, contact with Christianity has brought about an increased vitality in some of the Buddhist sects. The purpose of our missionary work is not to destroy the preexisting religious life of the Japanese, but to save it from decay and to enable it to find through Christ an opportunity for new and higher development.

JAPAN: A HANDBOOK  
ON THE MISSIONS OF  
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The building up of a Japanese Church has been necessarily a slow process. Yet to those who understand the conditions under which the

work was carried on, its success seems comparable to the spread of Christianity during the century following Pentecost. It is impossible here to tell the story of the growth from a little handful of converts (only ten at the end of the first decade) to the Church of today. *Japan: Handbooks on the Missions of the Episcopal Church*, No. II,

gives an excellent account of the way in which this branch of the Church has developed, until at the present time there are two independent Japanese dioceses, supported and led by the Japanese themselves. Perhaps the most encouraging feature is, that during the past ten years the increase in membership and in financial strength in these independent dioceses had been proportionately greater than in other parts of the Japanese field.

In trying to estimate the success attained in the Church's missionary work, attention should be directed not so much to what missionaries have done and are now doing, as to the quality and the strength of the Japanese Church. What progress has been made in the developing of qualified leadership? To what extent is it approaching self-support? Do the lives of its members bear witness to the saving power of Christ? Is it zealous in good works and characterized by a fervent evangelizing spirit? The careful reader of the *Handbook* will be satisfied that in all these respects Japanese Christianity has made remarkable progress. Most of the evangelistic work is already being done by native Japanese clergy, many of whom compare favorably in ability, training and character with those in the older Christian countries. The *Handbook* tells of the wonderful work done by Japanese Christians such as Mr. Ryoiche Ishii of Tokyo and Mr. Katsumosuke Kobashi of the Widely Loving Society.

KAGAWA

By

WILLIAM AXLING

Perhaps the most distinguished contemporary Japanese Christian is Toyohiko Kagawa. William Axling in a short biography reveals Kagawa as one of the heroic Christian characters of our day, but he does not idealize him. He shows him to be a "man of human clay, fighting his way toward the heights," but standing forth as one who is demonstrating most powerfully the principles and practices of the New Testament in his life and service.

Born in an atmosphere of frivolity and sensuousness, reared in an atmosphere of self-indulgence, he rebelled against this with all his heart and soul; taught that wealth, position and power were life's goals, he espoused poverty after his conversion and gave his life entirely to service of others. For fourteen years he lived in the worst slums of Tokyo among the off-scouring of the city in a wretched hut six feet square, which he shared with criminals and the diseased. In the midst of the itch, the pest, tuberculosis and syphilis he lived, slept and had his being. Life's span was to be short at the best—he would live it without anxiety or fear and act out the Sermon on the Mount. But out of this life among the utterly wretched arose his great books, his impassioned addresses, his successful fight for the eradication of the slums, his advocacy of the cause of labor, his mighty presentation of a Christian social order as the goal of the Church and the bulwark against the bloody revolution of atheistic com-

munism, his ever glowing zeal for evangelism and the conversion of individual souls from lives of sin to the new life of the sons of God.

The whole story of this many-sided life of miracles is a cheering evidence of the help: mystical, social, industrial, evangelistic which will come to the world-wide cause of the Kingdom of God, as Christianity spreads in the Orient and produces such fruits of Christ's working as Kagawa and others like him who are preaching and living with the zeal and the abandon of those who have found the pearl of great price and in their joy sell all they have that they may possess it and use it for their nation and the world.

The life of Kagawa and other Japanese Christians mentioned in the Japan *Handbook* and elsewhere indicate that already the Japanese Church is actually taking upon itself the responsibility of presenting the Christian Gospel to the Japanese nation.

This does not mean that the missionary task has come to an end. "It may seem surprising of even unreasonable that as the Japanese Church approaches self-support and autonomy, the need for outside assistance instead of ceasing should actually increase. Why should it not, when once it has attained its independence, be left to work out its own salvation? Would not this in the long run be the best thing for it? If the Japanese Church had only itself to consider this might be true. It is face to face, however, with the task of Christianizing the Japanese Empire. Its baptized membership is less than one

two-hundredth of the total population. Through no fault of its own it is divided up into different denominations, which are prevented from coalescing by prejudices or convictions inherited from us. While abounding in zeal, it is lacking in material resources. Very few, even of its leaders, have had time to assimilate thoroughly the Christian theology, yet they will be called upon to solve some of the most difficult problems that have ever confronted Christianity in the course of its history. Unless, therefore, we wish to postpone the Christianization of Japan until a distant future, we cannot leave the Japanese Church to struggle with the task alone." (Quoted from *Missionary Problems and Policies in Japan*, by H. St. George Tucker, out of print.)

The objectives sought during this preliminary stage of missionary work have been in large part attained, a nation prepared to give an understanding hearing to the Gospel message, and a Japanese Church which is qualified to present that message, provided it can receive our coöperation. The difficulties that lie ahead, while different from those of the past, are no less formidable. Since, however, the strengthening power of Christ has brought us thus far, there is no reason to doubt that He will crown our efforts with ultimate success.

## BOOKS RECOMMENDED FOR THE COURSE

SUZUKI LOOKS AT JAPAN, by Willis C. Lamott. (New York, Friendship Press, 1934.) Cloth \$1; paper 60 cents.

REALISM IN ROMANTIC JAPAN, by Miriam Beard. (New York, Macmillan, 1930.) \$5.

JAPAN: SOME PHASES OF HER PROBLEMS AND DEVELOPMENT, by Inazo Nitobe. (New York, Scribner, 1931.) \$5.

AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF JAPAN, by Herbert H. Gowen. (New York, Appleton-Century, 1927.) \$4.

JAPAN: HANDBOOKS ON THE MISSIONS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, No. II. (New York, National Council, 1934.) 50 cents.

KAGAWA, by William Axling. (New York, Harpers, 1932.) \$1.

These books may be purchased from The Book Store, Church Missions House, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y., at the price listed above, or may be borrowed from the Church Missions House Library, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y., for a period of two weeks, the only cost being postage each way.

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